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STRADELLA.

THE story of this romantic opera is founded on an episode in the life of the celebrated singer and composer ALESSANDRO STRADELLA.

In the FIRST ACT, a beautiful Venetian moonlight scene, STRADELLA accompanied by his pupils arrives in a gondola, and disembarking, serenades LEONORA, a lady to whom he has been giving music lessons; which have resulted in a mutual attachment. Leonora's guardian, who intends to marry her himself, has forbidden Stradella's visits, and the lovers resolve to escape. Accordingly Leonora appears on the balcony of her palace and tells Stradella of the difficulties in the way of her elopement, all the doors being guarded. At this moment a gay crowd of maskers appear, and entering into the thing with a spirit of mischief, furnish a rope ladder, by the aid of which Leonora descends to the ground. Her guardian, BASSI, soon pursues from the house, but the maskers interpose between him and the lovers, and the latter make their escape by means of Stradella's gondola.

The scene of the SECOND ACT is in the vicinity of Rome, and the opening Aria depicts the happiness of Leonora, who is about to be married to Stradella. Soon peasantry arrive with garlands of flowers, and the bridal procession sets out. Now appear successively BARBARINO and MALVOLIO, two professional assassins, who, hired for the purpose by Bassi, have traced Stradella's retreat and intend murdering him. The bridal party and train return, and Stradella seeing two strangers invites them to enter his house.

The THIRD ACT represents an interior in Stradella's house. The assassins begin to repent of their engagement to murder him, and resolve not to do it; but Bassi arrives, supposing the deed to have been accomplished, and after much persuasion, by the offer of a very large reward, he induces the bravos to renew their engagement. This time he resolves to supervise the deed personally, and remains in concealment, while Stradella enters from a door on the side and commences to sing a hymn of his own composition. The assassins steal towards him, but the words of the hymn, and the devotion of the singer overwhelm them with remorse, and they fall on their knees and beg the pardon of their intended victim; in this supplication Bassi joins, and thus becomes reconciled to Stradella and Leonora. G. W. T., JR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Alessandro Stradella.		TENOR.
Signor Bassi.		BASS.
Leonora.		SOPRANO.
Barbarino.	ASSASSINS.	TENOR.
Malvolio.	ASSASSINS.	BASS.

CHORUS.

Pupils, Maskers, Peasants, etc.

SCENE.

VENICE AND VICINITY OF ROME, A D. 1658.

STRADELLA.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE.—*A small Plaza in Venice. In the background a Canal, with a distant view of the sea. On the side* SIGNOR BASSI'S *house, which forms the corner of a narrow street—along the windows of the first story runs a balcony, which turns around the corner. It is moonlight. The stage is dimly lighted by a few lamps, and by the lights from the windows of the surrounding houses. On the rising of the curtain, a few gondolas are seen gliding along the canal.*

[STRADELLA, *and several pupils discovered in a gondola.*]

CHORUS.

While the soft moon-beams are shining
Through the stilly night,
Row we, row we, where, for freedom pining,
Love its lamp doth light.
While the oar with vigor plying
All around doth sleep,
Row we, row we, where, with hope undying,
Love its watch doth keep!

STRADELLA.

Though Venice many lovely daughters
She her own may proudly call—
Yet, dwelling near her moonlit waters,
One there is more dear than all!

CHORUS—(*Repeated.*)

While the soft moon-beams, etc., etc.

[*They all land from the gondola.*

RECITATIVE.

STRADELLA.

We are here, by the spot, where that loved one dwells,
Awaken her, my friends, with music's sweetest spells.
That beauteous form ne'er from my mind doth pass away,
Truth paints more lovely than e'er fancy may.

With warbling sweeter
Than that of birds,
In whispers greet her
With love's fond words!

CHORUS.

With warbling sweeter
Than that of birds,
We'll gently greet her
With love's own words.

SERENADE.

STRADELLA.

List, lady, list! while true love singeth,
Fondly its lay;
List to its notes, whose echo ringeth
Far—far away!
There, while each festive voice attuning,
Revel doth hold her wanton reign,
Here may each heart, with heart communing,
Breathe from the soul its purer strain.
List, lady, list! love's gentlest numbers
Floating in air,
Wakes into life from tranquil slumbers,
Love sleeping there!
Prithee come down—the night wind singing
Only is heard along the shore—
Prithee come down—the moments flying
Pass, and with time are known no more.
List, lady, list, etc., etc., etc.

CHORUS.

List, lady, list, etc., etc., etc.,
No light is gleaming,
No sound I hear,
Wake from thy dreaming,
Dispel my fear!

RECITATIVE.

STRADELLA.

Behold! in the apartment yonder
The taper sheds a pallid ray,
And love could not with feeling fonder
Its truth and its regard display.
Now watch ye, lest some listening ear
The accents love unfolds should hear.

[*All the pupils retire.* LEONORA *appears on the balcony.*]

LEONORA.

Stradella!

STRADELLA. Leonora, dearest!
Oh, come to me—brook no delay!

LEONORA.
Hush! softly—hush! while thou appearest,
Some watchful ear may all betray!
Yes, spies are nigh, who will pursue us,
Whose bitter hatred will undo us.
STRADELLA.
Where is the arm would dare assail me,
Whose life belongs to thee alone?
LEONORA.
The minstrel's aid can naught avail me,
Where power and wealth have fixed their throne.
To-morrow doth my guardian cherish
A hope that we shall be allied.
But rather in yon waves I'd perish
Than wear such dress, or be that bride!
STRADELLA.
Hence let us fly, then!
LEONORA. 'Tis vain essaying,—
By hirelings guarded is each door.
STRADELLA.
With love and faith in concert playing,
There is no path but they'll explore.

NOTTURNO.

STRADELLA.
Over hills, through valleys wending,
By the streamlet, in the glade,
E'en where dangers are impending,
And where footstep ne'er hath strayed:
All the ills imagined braving,
All the sorrows life can know,
Led by hope, all peril craving,
Love will unprotected go.
LEONORA.
With thine arm its aid extending,
With a heart like thine to share;
E'en though danger be impending,
There is none but I would dare.
On thy spotless truth relying,
Dark howe'er the future be,
With thee living, for thee dying,
Is the constant thought with me.
BOTH.
All the ills imagined braving, etc., etc., etc.
[*Shouting and noise heard at a distance.*

FINALE.

STRADELLA.
But, list! from revel hither reeling,
Footsteps approach this tranquil scene;
From their advance, with care concealing,
We may all observation screen;
Against ill-fortune love will shield us,
And chance, at once, full freedom yield us.
[*They both withdraw.*

[*Masquers of every description—some arriving in gondolas, and others promenading the streets, now fill the stage—some carry torches.*]

CHORUS.

Sounds of rapture,
Hearts to capture,
Swell their sweetest tones around!
Songs of mirth too,
Joy gives birth to,
Over land and wave resound!
Folly bringing
Bells—whose ringing
Is to some more sweet than all,
In the places
Beauty graces,
Folly's words will sometimes fall.
Torches flicker—
Thicker, thicker,
Gathers now the buzzing crowd;
Feelings lighter,
Visions brighter,
Eye ne'er saw, nor lip hath vowed.
Hurrah for Prince Carnival,
Chosen monarch of us all!
High in air your voices raising,
All your monarch's orders praising!

[*A ballet takes place here, at the end of which* STRADELLA *re-enters.*]

STRADELLA.
While pleasure here is warmly wreathing
Each joyful sound, each stirring word,
In tones, the force of either breathing,
The minstrel's music may be heard.

CHORUS.

Stradella! Stradella!
Whose voice conveying
Rapture around,
Alike displaying
All the depths of sound!
STRADELLA.
A masquer's trick, this moment, must be played
Will you, my friends, now proffer me your aid?

CHORUS.

Speak out, then, Stradella, with spirit free,
Thou the master art, thy subjects are we!
STRADELLA.
Then echo in chorus each word I sing
To her whose ear such solace they bring,—
To her, the loved lady, whose form I would see
Sole hope and delight in the wide world to me!

CHORUS.

To her, the loved lady, whose form you would see
Sole hope and delight in the wide world to thee
STRADELLA. (*Turning towards the balcony.*)
List, lady, list! while true love singeth
Fondly its lay—
List to its notes, whose echo ringeth
Far, far away!

CHORUS.

List, lady, list! etc., etc., etc.
LEONORA.
Ah! sweetly sounds the song of love,
The fondest dreams of bliss above,

And be the prospect bright or drear,
I'll follow thee, unmoved by fear!

[*The Masquers bring rope-ladders from the gondolas, and throw them up to* LEONORA, *by means of which she descends from the corner of the balcony.*]

CHORUS.

Come, lady, come, while none behold thee
Taking thy flight;
Come, lady, come, while now enfold thee
Shades of the night.

LEONORA.

'Tis freedom calls, and joy beyond control
Within my heart its purest beam is lighting.
To him I love, let me breathe forth my soul,
For you, his friends, regards and thanks uniting.

CHORUS.

Hurrah for Prince Carnival,
Chosen monarch of us all!

BASSI. (*Inside the balcony.*)

Leonora! Leonora!

LEONORA.

Ah! 'tis he! I am undone!

CHORUS.

Nothing fear—we will protect thee
From his rage, and watch the fun.

BASSI. (*Appearing in the balcony.*)

Leonora! Leonora!

FEMININE VOICES.

Here, sir, watchful, here we are.

BASSI.

Leonora! Leonora!

MASKERS.

What a blockhead—Ha! ha! ha!

BASSI.

Help! oh, help! come, watchmen, aid me!
Help the runaway to find,
Who this shameful trick has played me,
That in fetters I may bind.

[*Servants come out of the house, and Masquers range themselves in front.*]

CHORUS.

Haste ye! haste ye! nought betide ye,
With the star of love to guide ye!
May all bliss be now beside ye,
Where the wave now bears us on!

[*Enter* BASSI *from the house.*]

BASSI.

Seize them! watch them, where they waft her!

CHORUS.

LEONORA and STRADELLA.

Find them first, and seize them after

BASSI. Fifty scudi here I offer!

CHORUS.

Fifty blows upon thy head.

BASSI. (*To* LEONORA.)

Follow the advice I proffer,
Nor by art be thus misled.

LEONORA.

Guardy, think me not a scoffer,
If I choose this place instead.

LEONORA and STRADELLA.

Hurrah, for Prince Carnival,
Chosen monarch of us all.

[*During the chorus,* LEONORA *and* STRADELLA, *protected by the Masquers, reach the gondola, and continue singing with the chorus.*]

Hurrah for Prince Carnival,
Chosen monarch of us all!

[*The Masquers compel* BASSI, *spite of his resistance, to join in the dance, until he falls down from fatigue, as the curtain descends.*]

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT SECOND.

SCENE.—*The neighborhood of Rome*—STRADELLA'S *birth-place. On the side,* STRADELLA'S *house, having in front an escutcheon, on which is painted a bell, and the motto,* "A LA CAMPANELLA." *On the other side a tavern, with tables and chairs set out before it.*

[*Enter* LEONORA, *from the house, in a bridal dress.*]

RECITATIVE.

LEONORA.

And have I gained at length, the home desired so long,
Through hovering danger, and through weary way?
The feelings in my bosom now that throng,
An impulse hitherto unknown obey.
Awake, my soul, to heaven in grateful homage bend,
That with thy golden hopes such joy doth blend.

ARIA.

Be witness to my young heart's dreaming,
O, sun, that lightest up the sky!

Ye flowers beneath his splendor beaming,
Ye winds, which o'er their verdure sigh!
E'en as the dew which o'er ye weaveth
Its pearly mantle through the night,
So doth the balm the heart receiveth
Wake it into new delight.

Here, oh, let the breath of spring
Over earth its odor fling—
All that bloometh bright and fair
Wanton in the tranquil air.
Let each bird, amid the throng,
Pour its stream of matchless song.

Let all Nature, in her splendor,
Welcome in this blissful day,
Those in sorrow happy render,
Those who happy are, more gay—
For like the soul, in bondage pining,
Which long had mourned its tearful doom,
Now sees in all their beauty shining
New hopes awaken into bloom.

Here, oh! let the breath of spring, etc., etc., etc.

[*Enter Peasantry, bringing in flowers and garlands.*]

BELL CHORUS.

Hark! the merry bells are pealing
Sounds of sweetness through the air,
With devout, yet happy feeling,
To the altar now repair!
Here the joyous train is wending,
Dealing out delight around;
'Tis with virtue, love when blending,
True delight can e'er be found.

STRADELLA. (*Coming from the house.*)
Leonora!

LEONORA. Dearest!

STRADELLA. All is ready there.
The priest attends us to pronounce the vow—
And happy troops of friends, our bliss who share,
The bridal train are all awaiting now.

LEONORA and STRADELLA.
Oh! fondly plighted
In truth before,
And now united
For evermore.

[*Chorus of Peasants repeated.*]

Hark! the merry bells, etc., etc., etc.

[*They leave the stage—two and two—in procession.* LEONORA *and* STRADELLA *following as the ritornelle of the bells dies softly away.* MALVOLIO, *with his hat slouched over his face, slips to the side of the stage, reading a paper, and looking about on the left hand, as if trying to find some place to which he has been directed.*]

DUET.

MALVOLIO.
"On the left bank of the river,
Near a hill, and blooming ever
In a cluster—
Bright in lustre—
Of wild blossom and of bay,
In a house called 'Campanella,'
Dwells a signor—one Stradella—
Constituted,
And reputed,
The first singer of the day!"

[*Looking about him.*

There's the dwelling—there the river,
With its flowers blooming ever;
Written up there, "Campanella."
Ah! by Bacchus! friend Stradella,
You will soon become my prey!

[*Knocks at the door.*

Not a soul—nor a mouse is creeping—
All is silent—are they sleeping?

[*Opening the door.*

The door, too, open—nought concealing—
For there's nought at all worth stealing!

[*Glides into the house and closes the door after him.*

[*Enter* BARBARINO, *treading lightly, with a paper in his hand, and like* MALVOLIO, *with his hat slouched over his face.*]

BARBARINO.
"On the left bank of the river,
Near a hill, and blooming ever,
In a cluster—
Bright in lustre—
Of wild blossom and green bay,
In a house called 'Campanella,'
Dwells a signor—one Stradella—
Constituted,
And reputed,
The first singer of the day."

[*Looks around*

There's the dwelling—there's the river—
With its flowers blooming ever—
Written up there, "Campanella."
Ah! by Bacchus! friend Stradella,
You will soon become my prey!

[*Finding the door closed he looks in at the window.*

All is silent—not a soul here—
Not a mouse to keep control here!
I must enter, closely prying,
Just to keep the bird from flying!

[*He is endeavoring to climb in at the window—at the moment that* MALVOLIO, *entering from the door, comes behind him and seizes him.*]

MALVOLIO.
Villain! spy! for once I'll pay thee!

BARBARINO.
Devil's imp! at once I'll slay thee!

MALVOLIO. (*Drawing his dagger.*)
Thieving knave! receive the blow!

BARBARINO. (*Drawing his dagger.*)
Down to hell, a robber, go!

[*In the scuffle, the hats of both are knocked off, and recognizing each other, they burst out into a loud laugh.*]

MALVOLIO.
Ha! ha! ha! Friend Barbarino!
BARBARINO.
Ha! ha! ha! Friend Malvolio!
MALVOLIO. (*Showing his dagger.*)
For thee nearly I'd provided.
BARBARINO. (*Showing his dagger.*)
All thy hopes had nigh subsided.
MALVOLIO and BARBARINO.
Ha! ha! ha!
MALVOLIO. (*Shaking him by the hand.*)
Worthy friend, give me your hand, now—
BARBARINO. (*Also shaking hands.*)
What's your drift—let's understand now?
MALVOLIO.
Pretty prospect—wretched times these,
Useless 'gainst the torrent striving.
BARBARINO.
Bad times truly! precious climes these,
Where no earthly thing is thriving.
MALVOLIO.
How's your wife, pray, let me ask you?
BARBARINO.
Well and hearty—
MALVOLIO. Now, then, I'll task you
Beppo here and there is lurking,
Everywhere about is running,
Seeking what to thrust his dirk in—
BARBARINO.
Memmo's just about as cunning,
Be it daylight, be it dark,
He will never miss his mark.
BOTH. (*With assumed tenderness.*)
Hopeful offspring, how thou art
Comfort to thy parents' heart!
MALVOLIO.
Now, what brings you here, I'd know?

BARBARINO. (*Mysteriously, and making a motion as if giving a deadly stab.*)
I've—a—hem—hem—
MALVOLIO. Ah! just so!
BARBARINO.
And disclose why here *you* came.
MALVOLIO. (*Imitating him.*)
I, too,—hem—hem,—musn't name.
BARBARINO. (*In a low tone.*)
There's an old one, might be wiser,
Savage—sulky—and a miser,
Sent me here to take a note of
One he bids me cut the throat of.
MALVOLIO.
Hell and fury!
BARBARINO. What dost say?
MALVOLIO. (*In an under tone.*)
That's the game I've come to play!
There's an old one might be wiser,
Savage—sulky—and a miser,
Sent me here to take a note of
One he bids me cut the throat of.
BARBARINO.
There's a mistake!
MALVOLIO. No—no—no,
There's no mistake but your own—
BARBARINO. I'll let you know!

(*Drawing out a paper and reading.*)
"On the left bank of the river."
MALVOLIO. (*Also pulling out his paper and reading.*)
"Near a hill, and blooming ever,"
BARBARINO.
"In a house called 'Campanella.'"
MALVOLIO.
"Dwells a singer—one Stradella!"
BOTH. "Constituted,
And reputed,
The first singer of the day!"
Ha! ha! ha!
Truly, truly, such a joke now,
Mortal ne'er before hath heard;
For each sentence we have spoke now
Differs not a single word!
All is with the fellow over,
Money is a tempting sight
Note of singer—sigh of lover,
Bravo, bravo, we shall stop to-night
BARBARINO.
Which of us shall do the deed now?
MALVOLIO.
I alone will——
BARBARINO. Vain conceit!
Rather follow where I lead now—

[*Drawing his dagger, and rushing towards* MALVOLIO.]

MALVOLIO. (*Doing the same.*)
Then our daggers both must meet.
BARBARINO.
For your home I'm really grieving.
MALVOLIO.
I'm lamenting for your wife!
BARBARINO.
Let's, all jealous folly leaving,
MALVOLIO.
Now shake hands and end all strife.

[*The Ritornelle of the last chorus is heard behind the scenes.*]

FINALE.

MALVOLIO. Bells are ringing,
BARBARINO. Voices singing.
BOTH. Quickly let us hence recede;
MALVOLIO. And together,
BARBARINO. Settle whether
We at once can do the deed!
[*Both retire*

[*Enter* LEONORA, STRADELLA, *and the Peasants.*]

CHORUS.

See the hand of peace is strewing
Rosy garlands o'er your way,
May their verdure long renewing,
Be the emblem of this day!
Here the joyous train is wending,
Dealing out delight around;
'Tis with virtue, love when blending,
True delight can e'er be found.

RECITATIVE.

STRADELLA.
Then let this day, beaming and happy,
Of song and dance its chaplet weave,
To-morrow's dawn the shrine of the Madonna
Our thoughts more calm and sacred must receive.

CHORUS.

To-morrow's dawn the shrine of the Madonna
Our thoughts more calm and sacred must receive.

STRADELLA and LEONORA.
Oh! that life, with pure emotion,
Thus its time would but divide,
Now confined to deep devotion,
Then to mirth and joy allied.

BARBARINO and MALVOLIO. (*Aside.*)
Now his life, with sudden motion,
We to end had best decide;
I had not the slightest notion
Time and place would thus betide.

STRADELLA.
And now, beloved, quickly let each table
Groan with cheer good as ye are able.

[LEONORA, *accompanied by some of the peasant girls, brings out glasses, jugs, etc., from the house, while the rest of the party group themselves round the tables.*]

CHORUS.

With vine-dew when
We fill the glass,
How lightly then
Old Time doth pass.
Care quickly flies, when once the mind
That stream with all its charms doth bind.
The juice of grape
Elates the heart,
Its course doth shape,
Its power impart,
Gives to the cheek a roseate hue
Which, but for that it never knew—
In wine alone—in wine alone,
Doth pleasure build its throne.

MALVOLIO and BARBARINO. (*Coming forward.*)

MALVOLIO.
Your feast we beg to take a share in,

BARBARINO.
Just to partake what you are faring—

STRADELLA.
Who are you? Strangers?

MALVOLIO. Going whither
Each at the holy shrine now wends.

BARBARINO.
Stradella's fame has brought us hither
From distant shores, where it extends,

MALVOLIO.
Who, with his voice, is all that's wanting
To-morrow's feast to make enchanting.

STRADELLA.
I bid ye welcome—rest and cheer command;
The minstrel offers it with open hand.

BARBARINO.
My thanks!

MALVOLIO. My thanks!

BARBARINO.
And, for relief thus lending,
Long may your life be!

MALVOLIO.
And a peaceful ending!
[*Making a gesture as if stabbing*

CHORUS—(*Repeated.*)
With vine-dew when, etc.,

DRINKING DUET.

BARBARINO and MALVOLIO. (*While* LEONORA *presents them with goblets.*)
Fill to the brim of the bowl
(ECHOED BY THE 2d VOICE.)
The bowl!
Wine 'tis enlivens the soul.
(ECHO.) The soul!
They who all ill would dispel,
(ECHO.) Dispel!
Drink till they find they are well;
(ECHO.) Are well!
Fill! fill! fill! fill!
Over the rim
Bubbles shall swim—
Fill! fill! fill! fill!
Drink on as much as you will!

SECOND VERSE.

Nothing is half so good
(ECHO.) So good!
As is good wine from the wood—
(ECHO.) The wood!
Then with the hue of its tide,
(ECHO.) Its tide!
Let every palate be dyed—
(ECHO.) Be dyed!
Fill! fill! fill! fill!
Over the rim
Bubbles shall swim—
Fill! fill! fill! fill!
Drink on as long as you will!

THIRD VERSE.

Welcome for ever the spray—
(ECHO.) The spray!
Which on the surface doth lay;
(ECHO.) Doth lay!
While aside the foam you blow-
(ECHO.) You blow!
Bathe your lip in all below!
(ECHO.) Below!
Fill! fill! fill! fill!
Over the rim
Bubbles shall swim!
Fill! fill! fill! fill!
Drink on as much as you will!

CHORUS.

Fill! fill! fill! fill!

[*A ballet takes place here*

CHORUS OF PEASANTS

But that enjoyed by all may be
The welcome now before us—

OTHERS. (*To* STRADELLA.)

If you but sing right merrily—
We'll join in cheerful chorus.

STRADELLA.

With all my heart. Salvator Rosa's strain
I'll sing to you, and sing you the refrain.

ROMANCE.

STRADELLA.

The world with which our fate we link,
Is not so bad as one would think!
Deep in yon dingle,
Concealed from all eyes—
His prey there to single,
The freebooter lies.
Hush! hush!
From his bush!
Look out
Each scout,
For here comes a bevy,
With their cases well stowed,
And whom, if too heavy,
We ease of their load.
Fra! la! la!
Yet your bandit shows some pity,
In your bandit feelings dwell,
Those who live in crowded city,
Did they follow, would do well;
The world with which our fate we link,
Is not so bad as one would think.

CHORUS.

The world with which, etc., etc.

STRADELLA.

When one advances,
Demanding his name,
We venture all chances
The booty to claim.
Young! rich!
Both by which,
Our trade
Is made!
From woman we steal then
Smiles and kisses so bright,
From bough we steal blossom,
From day we steal light.
Fra! la! la!
Though your bandit's life like this is,
In your bandit, feelings dwell,
For we give back woman's kisses,
To the poor return as well—
The world with which our fate we link,
Is not so bad as people think.

CHORUS.

The world with which, etc., etc.

STRADELLA.

I am the painter,
Salvator they call,
Whose touch, bright or fainter,
Is well known to all
Cliff—rock—
Battle's shock.
On hill,
By rill,
The spot of thy slumber
Shall be one of repose,
We'd die ere we'd number
Thy name amongst foes!
Fra! la! la!
For your bandit shows some pity,
In your bandit, feelings dwell,
Those who live in crowded city,
Did they follow, would do well.
The world with which our fate we link,
Is not so bad as we would think.

CHORUS.

The world with which, etc., etc.

[STRADELLA *retires into the house with* LEONORA, *and beckons the Robbers to follow them.*]

MALVOLIO. (*Looking significantly at his companion.*)

For your bandit shows some pity,
In your bandit, feelings dwell,

BARBARINO. (*With the same action.*)

Those who dwell in crowded city,
Did they follow, would do well!

[*They enter the house slowly, and shaking their heads.*]

CHORUS.

Fill! fill! fill! fill!

END OF ACT SECOND

ACT THIRD.

SCENE.—*An ante-room in* STRADELLA'S *house. In the background a large curtain is drawn before a verandah. Side doors. In the foreground, on the left-hand side,* LEONORA *and* STRADELLA *are seated on a bench. On the right hand* MALVOLIO *and* BARBARINO *are on the ground playing "Alla Morra."*

SONG.

STRADELLA.

Oh! Italy, my native land,
With verdure ever teeming!
No sea like that which laves thy strand,
No sky with light so beaming;
The sweetest tones of minstrel spell,
Cannot with their magic tell,

My native land, fair Italy,
How deep my love for thee.

LEONORA.

Of Rome's sacred walls the fame all are singing,
In splendor, in ruin, around though they nod—
While o'er them time his flight is winging,
A whisper bids us trust in God.
And along each valley, and o'er each mountain,
How brightly doth the morning break!
The birds on light wing, where plays each fountain,
With harmony the world awake.
La! la! la!
Oh! Italy, my native land, etc., etc., etc.

BARBARINO.

The wonders of Rome and of Venice no doubt of,
But I, fair La Spezzia would not live out of.
Tuscana's the Phœbe
Presents me my wine;
And long live that Hebe
Who pours from such vine!

MALVOLIO.

Fair Naples I like, and its sunny blue skies,
And its wine and its women how highly I prize!
Of nice maccaroni there is ne'er an end,
Enough for one's self and to spare for a friend.
The gay Tarantella, by beauty when led,
And sleep *alla stella* with sky overhead.

ALL FOUR.

Oh, Italy, my native land,
With verdure ever teeming
No sea like that which laves thy strand,
No sky with light so beaming.
The sweetest tones of minstrel's spell
Cannot, with all their magic, tell,
My native land, fair Italy,
How deep my love for thee!

PILGRIMS' CHORUS.

[*Behind the scenes.*

Over valley and mountain glowing,
Morning's beams in their beauty shine
All their bright effulgence throwing
O'er the pure Madonna's shrine!
Here with hope, each pilgrim pressing,
Comes to breathe his fervent strain,
Comes to ask that holy blessing
Contrite hearts ne'er ask in vain!

LEONORA. (*During the chorus.*)

Pilgrims here, with pious offer,
On that shrine their incense fix,
Of their goodness; let no scoffer
In their prayers fail to mix.

STRADELLA.

Let us hope, that prayer granting,
All our efforts may be blessed;
That this strain you deem enchanting
Find an echo in each breast.

BOTH.

And fresh garlands, ere they wither,
Chaplets that are bright and fair,
Let us all, repairing thither,
In their beauty humbly bear. [*Exeunt both.*

[*During this chorus* MALVOLIO *and* BARBARINO *are seen playing Alla Morra.*]

BARBARINO.

Seven!

MALVOLIO. Thirteen—ten—eight—

BARBARINO.

I do not like it—

MALVOLIO. Nine—four—I am the winner!

BARBARINO.

Thirteen—ten—as I'm a sinner,
I cannot a chance obtain.

MALVOLIO.

Five and eight—by Jove! I've won again!

[MALVOLIO *and* BARBARINO *at the exit of* STRADELLA *and* LEONORA, *go into the respective doors, right and left.*]

BASSI. (*Thrusting his head through the curtains.*)

All silent here! and have they been supplanted?
The punishment they merit made to feel?
And here his dying song the singer chanted?
Ha! some one comes—let me myself conceal.
[*He withdraws*

[*Re-enter* MALVOLIO *and* BARBARINO.]

TERZETTO.

MALVOLIO.

Tell me now, friend Barbarino,
What think you about this deed?

BARBARINO.

Say yourself, friend Malvolio,
What your wisdom has decreed?

MALVOLIO.

Well, I would, the truth admitting,
All the matter leave to you—

BARBARINO.

No—I will not—'tis more fitting
You the dainty work should do.

MALVOLIO.

Nonsense!

BARBARINO. Do it—

MALVOLIO. I'm not jealous!

BARBARINO.

Thine's the money!

MALVOLIO. Glory's thine!

BARBARINO.

You're the cleverest of all fellows,

MALVOLIO.

None can all your worth define—

BARBARINO.

Fare ye well—I dare not do it!
Not a hair this hand shall touch!

MALVOLIO.

Fare ye well—I long should rue it,
For I like the singer much.

BASSI. (*Coming forward.*)

How! what hear I?

BOTH. Ha! the old one!

BASSI. Is it thus your word you keep?

MALVOLIO. (*Holding out a purse to* BASSI.)

Here—for I have not your gold won!

BARBARINO. (*Doing the same.*)

Throw this rubbish in your heap!

BASSI.
The means I furnished—
BOTH. Can not be employed!
BASSI.
The pledge you gave me—
BOTH. (*Throwing the money to him.*)
Is null and void!
BASSI. (*Sneeringly.*)
And you are bravi called?
BOTH. (*Grasping their daggers.*)
And do you doubt it?
BASSI.
And make—the fellow's death—such fuss about it!
BARBARINO. Yes!
For your bandit has some pity—
In your bandit, feelings dwell,
Those who live in crowded city—
Did they follow—would do well!
BASSI. By them I'm cheated,
And most ill-treated—
They have betrayed me—
Their sport have made me;
And if this lover
Should but discover—
What my design was—
'Twould be my death!
BOTH. By us he's cheated,
And most ill-treated—
We have betrayed him—
Our sport have made him;
And if the lover
Should but discover
What his design was,
They'll stop his breath!

[*About to withdraw.*

BASSI. (*To* MALVOLIO.)
Stay, one word more!
MALVOLIO. I must hurry
To my wife—or she will curse.
BASSI.
Only hear me!
BARBARINO. Why this hurry—
When my baby I've to nurse?
BASSI.
But the price if I should double,
You, perhaps, would risk the deed?
BARBARINO.
Silence, tempter! spare the trouble.
MALVOLIO.
Hold your tongue—you'll not succeed.
BASSI. (*In a coaxing tone.*)
Twenty more then,
From my store then,
Reckon them o'er then,
Ere you refuse.
BOTH. Will you not take us?
Nought can shake us,
Nor money make us
Such weapons use.
BASSI. Five more I offer—
MALVOLIO.
No, no, most kind sir,
BASSI. Ten more I'll proffer—
BARBARINO.
Won't change my mind, sir.
BASSI. A hundred my word insures.
MALVOLIO.
Oh! his song revenge disarms.
BASSI. Well, fifty more are yours—
BARBARINO.
No voice has equal charms.
BASSI. By them I'm cheated, etc., etc., etc.
BOTH. By us he's cheated, etc., etc., etc.
BASSI. And will two hundred satisfy you?
BOTH. (*Hesitating.*)
Two hundred?
BARBARINO. (*Shaking his head.*)
Sorry to deny you;
MALVOLIO.
Great singers do not here abound
BARBARINO.
'Tis said they are not to be found.
BASSI. But hear me!
BARBARINO. Any stage director
Would pay us double for refusing!
BASSI. Turn but a moment reflect—or—
MALVOLIO.
Wait only till his voice he's losing!
BARBARINO.
It won't last long!
BASSI. Three hundred be it—
MALVOLIO. (*Aside, to* BARBARINO.)
What say'st thou? hem!
BARBARINO. (*Also aside.*) Just let me see it.
BASSI. Three hundred! will or will you not?
MALVOLIO. (*Pointing to* BARBARINO.)
Ask him—
BARBARINO. (*Pointing to* MALVOLIO.)
Ask him! will he approve the plot?
MALVOLIO and BARBARINO.
No! no! no! no!
BOTH. We strike no blow.

[*They turn as if to depart*

BASSI. Four hundred, but no more I'll give!
BOTH. Four hundred!
BASSI. But he must not live—
One moment more you must not tarry,
And quickly back the fair one carry.
BARBARINO.
Well then—as flies are caught by honey—
MALVOLIO.
But first pay down one half the money.
BARBARINO.
Two hundred now;
MALVOLIO. And two hundred later.
BASSI. (*With a sigh.*)
Well—here's the money—
(*Aside.*) Can there rogues be greater?

Matters are wound now,
Firmness they've found now,
And they are bound now,
Their part to play!
Though courage quaileth,
Though nought prevaileth,
Gold never faileth
To work its way.

BARBARINO and MALVOLIO.
Matters are wound now,
Means he has found now,
And we are bound now
Our part to play!
Though courage faileth,
Though nought prevaileth,
Gold never faileth
To work its way!

BASSI. He is coming, now be still.

MALVOLIO.
'Tis Stradella—perfect though each verse in—

BARBARINO.
Yes—but still he is rehearsing—

BASSI. My revenge shall have its fill.

TERZETTO.

Gently—softly—not one word
Must from either lip be heard!
Watch the time, all fear dispel,
Gentle minstrel, fare you well!

[*They retire behind the curtain.*

[*Enter* STRADELLA.]

FINALE.

How sweetly gentle day around its beams is throwing,
Bright as upon each brow young joy is seen to smile;
The throng is swelling on—like waves of ocean flowing,
With music's thrilling charm—the moments to beguile!

But should the minstrel's theme unworthy prove of glory,
If, haply, he should fail—his ardor cool at length—
Madonna! at your shrine a pilgrim dares implore ye,
That for his noble task you'll grant him nerve and strength.

[STRADELLA *has a sheet of paper in his hand, and advances to sing, and* BASSI, MALVOLIO *and* BARBARINO *come from behind the curtain, and stand watching in the background.*]

HYMN.

Virgin Maria! ever divinely
Spotless Madonna! as thou hast smiled—
Ah! down from thy dwelling look now benignly,
As when thy beauty beamed o'er thy child!
Mother of blessings! thou who delightest
Bright hopes imparting, all to make glad!
Mother of sorrows! thou who requitest
Griefs that are heavy—hearts that are sad!
Blessed Madonna! while we adore thee
While with emotion each spirit doth glow,
Holy Madonna! here we implore thee!
All thy protection and grace to bestow.

BASSI. (*Aside, to* MALVOLIO.)
Now is the time—

MALVOLIO. What! stab him as he prays?

BASSI. (*To* BARBARINO.)
Why not proceed?

BARBARINO. How charming are his lays!

STRADELLA.
Oh! enlighten all in error,
That in virtue their days may be passed!
To the wretched be a terror,
Who upon thee derision have cast.
Woe to the hardened
Whom doubt hath enslaved,
Ne'er to be pardoned—
Ne'er to be saved!
He so divested
Of faith to deny,
Scorned and detested
In ruin will die.

MALVOLIO.
In horror I tremble!

BARBARINO.
'Tis vain to dissemble!

STRADELLA.
But, forgiven,
Be in heaven,
Those contrition brings to thee!
When repenting,
In lamenting
They before thee bend the knee!
For the sinner's consolation,
When thy throne he doth address,
And by deeds of expiation
Doth his guilt to thee confess.

[MALVOLIO *and* BARBARINO, *who have already dropped their uplifted daggers, now fall on their knees.*]

ALL. For the sinner's consolation,
When thy throne he doth address,
And by deeds of expiation
Doth his guilt to thee confess.

STRADELLA. (*Perceiving them.*)
Ha! who are ye?

LEONORA. (*Running in.*
Ah! my guardian!

STRADELLA. (*To the* BANDITS.)
And why armed here?

MALVOLIO. Bent on thy death we came—

BARBARINO.
Thy song our souls hath charmed here!

BASSI.
Forgive then, and forget! Oh! call me henceforth friend.

STRADELLA and LEONORA.
Delightedly!

MALVOLIO and BARBARINO. (*Throwing down the money at* BASSI'S *feet.*)
Take your gold—
BASSI. 'Tis yours!
MALVOLIO and BARBARINO. We grateful bend!

[*The scene changes, and discovers the Grand Plaza at Rome, with a view of St. Peter's arranged for the Festival of the Madonna.*]

FULL CHORUS.

Here the pious groups repairing,
Now await the choral train,
Who approach with humble bearing,
Waking music's purest strain!
Borne away with deep emotion,
From his lips is poured that sound,
Whose subdued, yet full devotion,
Breathes its gentle influence round!
Here the pious groups, etc., etc.

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